

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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P R 191510Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1371

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0476

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, ZA, RH

SUBJECT: MORE ON CHITEPO ASSASSINATION

REF: LUSAKA 463

SUMMARY: BOTH PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND RHODESIAN ANC LEADER MUZOREWA HAVE DEPLORED MARCH 18 ASSASSINATION OF ANC/ZANU LEADER HERBER CHITEPO, KILLED WHEN LANDMINE EXPLODED UNDER HIS CAR. WHILE CONDEMNING CRIME AS WORK OF "ENEMIES OF ZIMBABWE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND ANC UNITY," NEITHER HAS IMPLICATED RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT. PRO-ZANU SPOKESMAN, ON OTHER HAND, HAVE BLAMED RHODESIA AND UNIDENTIFIED "IMPERIALISTS" FOR CHITEPO DEATH. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT FACTIONAL STRUGGLE FOR POWER WITHIN ZANU RATHER THAN RHODESIAN AGENTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHITEPO DEATH. NEVERTHELESS, INCIDENT SEEMS CONFIDENTIAL

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LIKELY TO DIM EVEN FURTHER HOPE FOR EARLY RESUMPTION OF ANC-

RHODESIAN GOVT TALKS ALREADY STALLED BY SMITH REGIME'S DETENTION OF NDABANINGI SITHOLE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN STATEMENTS ISSUED MARCH 18 FOLLOWING NEWS OF DEATH OF ZANU LEADER HERBERT CHITEPO, BOTH PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND RHODESIAN ANC CHAIRMAN BISHOP MUZOREWA EXPRESSED THEIR SHOCK AND HORROR. KAUNDA CALLED CHITEPO MURDER "OBVIOUSLY THE WORK OF THE ENEMIES OF UNITY IN ZIMBABWE, ENEMIES OF THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE BASED ON MAJORITY RULE, ENEMIES OF PEACE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA BENT ON TURNING THE CLOCK BACK. WHOEVER THEY ARE AND WHATEVER THEY ARE, WE PLEDGE OUR EFFORTS TO SEEK THEM OUT AND TO FIGHT THEM. THIS COLD-BLOODED MURDER IS DIRECTED AT SABOTAGING UNITY OF ANC, FRUSTRATING THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM, AND ENTRENCHING MINORITY RULE... DEATH OF CHITEPO WILL NOT END STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE. ON THE CONTRARY, IT ONLY STRENGTHENS THE RESOLVE OF ALL OF US GENUINELY COMMITTED TO FREEDOM OF THAT COUNTRY TO STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF UNITY AMONG PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE UNDER LEADERSHIP OF ANC."

2. BISHOP MUZOREWA'S STATEMENT PRAISED LATE CHITEPO AS FIRST AFRICAN ADVOCATE (IN RHODESIA) AND AS FIGHTER FOR LIBERATION OF ZIMBABWE. "THE ENEMY OF ZIMBABWE'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM MUST NOT THINK THAT HERBERT'S DEATH IS END OF THE STRUGGLE. I APPEAL TO OUR PEOPLE BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE TO REMAIN CALM AND UNITED. I PARTICULARLY APPEAL TO THOSE BASED IN ZAMBIA TO COME FORWARD AND HELP THE POLICE IN THEIR INVESTIGATIONS SO THAT CULPRITS CAN BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE." SPEAKING FOR ZAPU ELEMENT WITHIN ANC, GEORGE SILUNDIKA DESCRIBED DEATH AS "THE WORK OF THE ENEMIES OF ZIMBABWE LIBERATION STRUGGLE."

3. UNIDENTIFIED BUT CLEARLY PRO-ZANU ANC SPOKESMAN IN LUSAKA ISSUED STATEMENT EXPLICITLY CALLING CHITEPO'S DEATH "WORK OF RHODESIAN SETTLER SPIES, IMPERIALISTS, AND ENEMIES OF THE ZIMBABWE REVOLUTION." STATEMENT ALLEGED THAT CHITEPO HAS IN RECENT MONTHS BEEN TARGET OF "THE MOST NAKED AND WANTON SMEAR CAMPAIGN BY THE IMPERIALIST PRESS FOR HIS FIRM AND RESOLUTE STAND ON QUESTION OF IMMEDIATE MAJORITY RULE IN ZIMBABWE ON BASIS OF ONE MAN, ONE VOTE." STATEMENT ADDED THAT CHITEPO'S "DASTARDLY AND COWARDLY MURDER FOLLOWED SYSTEMATIC PATTERN TO HARRASS AND INTIMIDATE AND SUPPRESS ZIMBABWE LEADERS INSIDE

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AND OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE SINCE 1965." STATEMENT CONCLUDED WITH PLEDGE THAT ZNLA, ZANU'S FIGHTING ARM, WILL NOT BE COWED INTO SUBMISSION BY IMPERIALISTS AND REACTIONARIES. "WE WILL HIT AND HIT HARD. THERE WILL BE NO COMPROMISE OR SURRENDER OF PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH CHITEPO HAS BEEN KILLED. WE SHALL FIGHT TO THE BITTER END."

4. ZAMBIAN PRESS TODAY ALSO CARRIES STATEMENT ISSUED IN SALIS-

BURY BY ANC/ZANU LEADER ROBERT MUGABE THAT DEATH OF CHITEPO WAS "UNDOUBTEDLY" WORK OF RHODESIAN GOVT, "OPERATING THROUGH THE WILLING HAND OF ITS ZAMBIAN AGENTS." IN SEPARATE STATEMENT, ANC SPOKESMAN EDSON SITHOLE SAID THAT DEATH OF CHITEPO SO SOON AFTER NDABANINGI SITHOLE'S DETENTION WAS NO COINCIDENCE. "THESE INCIDENTS HAVE SHATTERED IRREPARABLY THE EXERCISE OF DETENTE AND A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA," SITHOLE ADDED.

5. EDSON SITHOLE'S VIEW IS ECHOED BY TIMES OF ZAMBIA EDITORIAL WHICH WARMS RHODESIAN WHITES THAT CHITEPO'S DEATH EFFECTIVELY ENDS ANY CHANGE FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY MAIL ACKNOWLEDGES THAT HIS MURDERERS COULD COME "FROM RANKS OF SELFISH, POWER-HUNGRY MEN WHO MIGHT WELL HAVE POSED AS HIS FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES" AS WELL AS FROM THE KNOWN ENEMIES OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE. MAIL EDITORIAL, IN FACT, IMPLIES THIS MAY VERY WELL BE CASE AS IT GOES ON TO SAY THAT RESPONSIBLE PARTIES ARE PROBABLY AMONG THOSE NOW SHEDDING CROCODILE TEARS OVER DEATH.

6. DAILY MAIL ALSO FRONT-PAGES RHODESIAN SPOKESMAN'S MARCH 18 DENIAL OF ALLEGATIONS THAT SMITH REGIME WAS IMPLICATED IN CHITEPO DEATH. "THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE TO BE EXPECTED BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEM AND THEY ARE CATEGORICALLY DENIED."

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1372

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 0476

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

7. PRESS TODAY ALSO CARRIES FURTHER DETAILS ON BLAST THAT KILLED CHITEPO. SOURCE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN LANDMINE PLANTED OUTSIDE HIS HOME IN LUSAKA'S CHILENJE SOUTH TOWNSHIP. KILLED WITH CHITEPO WERE A BODYGUARD, SILAS SHAMISO, AND TWO-YEAR OLD NEIGHBOR STRUCK BY FLYING DEBRIS. ANOTHER BODYGUARD, SADAT KUFA, REMAINS IN CRITICAL CONDITION AT LUSAKA HOSPITAL. CHITEPO'S VW BEETLE WAS TOTALLY DEMOLISHED IN BLAST.

8. AS ANTICIPATED, IMMEDIATE TENDENCY OF ZAMBIANS AND OF ANC MODERATE LEADERSHIP REPRESENTED BY MUZOREWA HAS BEEN TO AVOID SINGLING OUT RHODESIAN GOVT AS OBJECT OF THEIR SUSPICION, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN DOUBTS AS TO RHODESIAN CULPABILITY AND A HESITANCY TO MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE. ZANU ELEMENTS, ON OTHER HAND, ARE PREDICTABLY BLAMING RHODESIANS AND OTHER, VAGUELY DEFINED "IMPERIALIST" CIRCLES. IN DOING SO, THEY PRESUMABLY HOPE NOT ONLY TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THEIR
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CONTENTION THAT ONLY BY ARMED STRUGGLE CAN MAJORITY RULE BE ACHIEVED IN RHODESIA BUT PERHAPS ALSO TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM INTERNAL FACTIONAL DISPUTES WITHIN ZANU. AS INDICATED REFTTEL, WE BELIEVE CHITEPO'S DEATH IS PROBABLE CONSEQUENCE OF CONTINUING POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN ZANU, COMPLICATED AND REINFORCED BY MANICA-KARANGA TRIBAL RIVALRIES. USE OF LANDMINE AS MURDER WEAPON SUGGESTS ZNLA ELEMENTS AND PERHAPS EVEN ZNLA COMMANDER JOSIAH TONGOGARA HIMSELF IMPLICATED IN CRIME. IF CURRENT INVESTIGATION BY ZAMBIAN POLICE AND SECURITY SUPPORTS THIS SUSPICION, RESULT COULD BE CRACKDOWN BY PRESIDENT KAUNDA ON ZANU-ZNLA ACTIVITIES IN ZAMBIA.

9. MEANWHILE, THERE REMAINS SERIOUS POSSIBILITY THAT FRAGILE PROGRESS TOWARD RHODESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS, ALREADY SERIOUSLY SET BACK BY SITHOLE DETENTION, MAY HAVE BEEN DEALT ALMOST FATAL BLOW BY CHITEPO DEATH. KAUNDA WILL LIKELY CONTINUE TO DO WHAT HE CAN TO DISSUADE ANC LEADERSHIP FROM ABANDONING NEGOTIATING EFFORT ENTIRELY BUT HE CAN ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL IN DOING SO NOW IF VORSTER-SMITH TALKS IN CAPE TOWN RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT PROSPECTS FOR COMPROMISE ON BOTH MODALITIES AND SUBSTANCE OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE.
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